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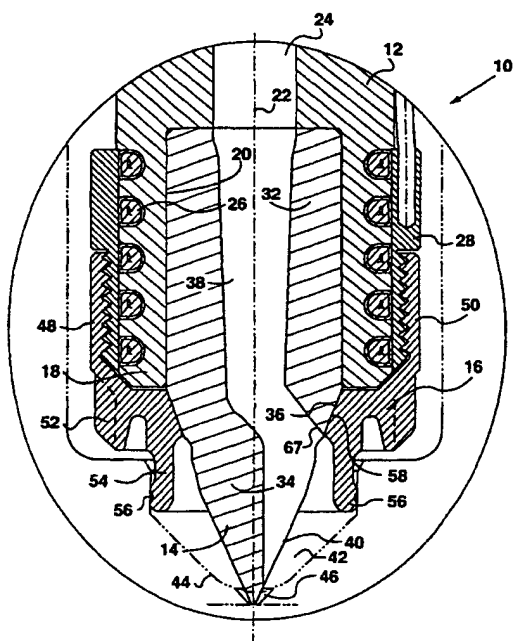
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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: INJECTION NOZZLE SYSTEM



(57) Abstract: A nozzle system (10) is provided comprising a nozzle tip (14) supported in a nozzle body (12) with an alignment member (16). The alignment member (16) has a connection (48) for engaging a corresponding connection (30) located on the nozzle body (12). The alignment member (16) also has an aperture (57) concentric with the sleeve (50) that has a tapered engagement surface (58) for contacting a tapered surface (36) on the nozzle tip (14). A first melt channel (24) is defined through the nozzle body (12) and a second melt channel (38) is defined through the nozzle tip (14). The melt channel (38) in the nozzle tip has a first section (60) that extends along a first axis (22) from an inlet (62), a second section (64) that extends from the first section (60) at an incline and a third section (66) that extends from the second section (64) parallel to and eccentric with the first axis (22). The resulting melt channel defines a straight through channel (72) parallel to said first axis (22) from said inlet (62) to the opening (40) of the nozzle tip (14).

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Title: INJECTION NOZZLE SYSTEM**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to injection molding and in particular to an injection nozzle system.

5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Temperature control of the melt as it exits the tip of an injection nozzle is often critical to successful injection molding. If the temperature rises too high degradation of the melt will result and if the temperature falls too low the melt will clog up the system.

10 One approach to controlling the temperature of the melt at the tip of the nozzle is to divert the melt so that it exits the nozzle tip from a side opening (see for example U.S. patent 5,658,604 (Gellert)). The melt then collects in a gathering space surrounding the tip before it passes through the mold gate. The advantage of this approach is that the
15 resulting greater mass of the tip below the side opening improves heat transfer from the tip to the melt collecting in the gathering space. A problem with this approach is that the diversion of the melt effects the even flow of the melt through the system. Also, the diversion through a side opening introduces the melt to relatively cooler surfaces of the melt
20 plate that tend to cool the melt excessively.

It is also important that the nozzle tip be located accurately within the nozzle body to ensure that the respective melt channels align. Slight variances in the diameters of the nozzle tips and the bores of the nozzle bodies, or in the thread engagement between the nozzle body and
25 nozzle tip, can lead to slight misalignments of the respective melt channels. Such misalignments can negatively effect the flow of melt through the nozzle.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides an improved nozzle system that overcomes the problems discussed above.

In one aspect, the invention provides a nozzle tip for an
5 injection molding machine, said nozzle tip comprising:
a body having a first portion and a second portion;
a melt channel extending from an inlet defined in said first
portion to an opening defined in said second portion, a first section of said
melt channel extending from said inlet along a first axis, a second section
10 of said melt channel extending from said first section along a second axis
that is inclined relative to said first axis and a third section of said melt
channel extending from said second section along a third axis that is
parallel to and eccentric from said first axis, wherein a straight through
channel is defined in said melt channel parallel to said first axis from said
15 inlet to said opening.

In another aspect, the invention provides a nozzle system for
an injection molding machine, said nozzle system comprising:
a nozzle body defining a first melt channel and a bore along a
common axis, said nozzle body having a first connector;
20 a nozzle tip defining a first portion sized to fit in said bore
and a second portion for protruding from said bore, said nozzle tip
defining a second melt channel;
a first tapered engagement surface defined on said second
portion of said nozzle tip; and
25 an alignment member having a cylindrical sleeve with a
second connector for releasably connecting said alignment member to said
first connector of said nozzle body, said alignment member defining an
aperture coaxially with said cylindrical sleeve, said aperture having a
second tapered engaging surface for engaging said first tapered engaging
30 surface on said nozzle tip to locate said nozzle tip in said nozzle body with
said first and second melt channels aligned along said common axis.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the present invention, and to show more clearly how it may be carried into effect, reference will now be made by way of example to the accompanying drawings. The drawings show preferred embodiments of the present invention, in which:

Fig. 1 is a partial cross sectional view of a nozzle system in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 2 is an exploded cross sectional view of the nozzle system of Fig. 1;

Figs. 3(a)-(p) are transverse sectional views of the nozzle tip of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a partial cross sectional view of a nozzle system in accordance with a second embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 5 is a partial cross sectional view of a nozzle system in accordance with the present invention, the system being utilized with a direct sprue gate;

Fig. 6 is a partial cross sectional view of a nozzle system in accordance with the present invention, the system being utilized with a hot valve gate; and

Fig. 7 is a partial cross sectional view of a nozzle system in accordance with the present invention, the system being utilized with a cylindrical valve gate.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to Figs. 1 and 2, an injection nozzle system in accordance with the present invention is shown generally at 10. The nozzle system 10 includes a nozzle body 12, a nozzle tip 14 and an alignment member 16.

The nozzle system 10 is used with an injection molding machine (not shown) such as is shown and described in US Patent 5658604

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(Gellert) which is hereby incorporated by reference.

Nozzle body 12 has an end 18 that defines a bore 20 along channel axis 22 for receiving the nozzle tip 14. A melt channel 24 is defined in the nozzle body 12 and opens at the bore 20. Electric heating element 26 extends about the outer circumference of the nozzle body 12 and is supported by a holder 28. A first connector 30 is disposed on the circumference of the nozzle body 12. Preferably, first connector 30 is an external thread however other suitable connecting means may be utilized. For instance, first connector 30 could be a rotatable collar defining an internal thread for connecting with a corresponding threaded element as described further below.

Nozzle tip 14 has a first portion 32 that is sized to fit within the bore 20 of the nozzle body 12. Nozzle body 12 also has a second portion 34 that protrudes from the end 18 of the nozzle body 12. Second portion 34 defines an outer engagement surface 36 that has opposing tapered walls and is preferably frusto-conical. The configuration of the second portion 34 below the outer engagement surface 36 is preferably conical ending in apex 37. A melt channel 38 is defined through nozzle tip 14 from the first portion 32 to the second portion 34. Melt channel 38 of nozzle tip 14 aligns with melt channel 24 of nozzle body 12 to permit the flow of pressurized melt from the nozzle body 12 to the nozzle tip 14. An opening 40 in the second portion 34 allows melt to pass from the nozzle tip 14 to a gathering space 42 defined in a mold plate 44 where it collects before entering a mold gate 46.

Alignment member 16 has a second connector 48 disposed on sleeve 50 to connect with first connector 30 to secure the nozzle tip 14 to the nozzle body 12. Second connector 48 is preferably an internal thread defined on the inner surface of sleeve 50 however other suitable connecting means may be utilized. For instance, second connector 48 may be an external thread defined on the outer surface of sleeve 50 to threadably engage with the rotatable collar type of first connector 30 on nozzle body 12 as described above.

A hexagonal flange 52 is disposed on the alignment member 16 to facilitate tightening or loosening the connection of alignment member 16

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with the nozzle body 12. A sealing flange 54 is disposed on the alignment member 16 for contacting mold plate 44 to form a seal against pressurized melt leaking from the gathering space 42 to adjacent parts of the molding machine. Sealing flange 54 has an abutment face 56 that abuts against the surface of the mold plate 44 to form the desired seal.

Alignment member 16 also includes an aperture 57 defining an inner engagement surface 58 sized to receive second portion 34 of nozzle tip 14 and engage outer engaging surface 36. Inner engaging surface 58 has opposing tapered walls and is preferably frusto-conical. Inner engagement surface 58 is coaxial with sleeve 50 so that inner engagement surface 58 will be coaxial with bore 20 and melt channel 24 when alignment member 16 is mounted to nozzle body 12.

In use, inner engagement surface 58 of alignment member 16 engages outer engagement surface 36 of nozzle tip 14 to concentrically align melt channel 38 of nozzle tip 14 with melt channel 24 of nozzle body 12.

Referring to Figs. 3(a)-(p), the structure of melt channel 38 defined through nozzle tip 14 may be better understood. Melt channel 38 has a first section 60 that extends along channel axis 22 through first portion 32 of nozzle tip 14. First section 60 decreases in cross sectional area from an inlet 62 to the beginning of second section 64. Second section 64 extends diagonally from channel axis 22 to third section 66. The cross sectional area of second section 64 remains relatively constant along its length. The upper wall 67 of the second section 64 terminates at the upper periphery of the opening 40. Third section 66 extends parallel to channel axis 22 to opening 40.

The channel wall 68 of third section 66 is located nearer to channel axis 22 than is the channel wall 70 of first section 60. Accordingly, a through channel 72 is defined parallel to channel axis 22 from inlet 62 to opening 40. Through channel 72 improves the flow of melt through melt channel 38 and reduces the occurrence of pressure drops. Through channel 72 also reduces heat losses in the melt as it enters the gathering space 42 by directing more melt centrally adjacent to the hotter nozzle tip 14 and less

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melt eccentrically towards cooler surfaces of the nozzle system 10 and mold plate 44. The structure of melt channel 38 thus optimizes the heat transfer provided by exposing the surface of the melt to the larger mass of the nozzle tip 14 with the reduced heat losses provided by directing melt away from cooler parts of the apparatus.

Referring to Fig. 4, a second embodiment of nozzle system 10 in accordance with the present invention is shown. Those elements of the nozzle system 10 that correspond with elements of the first embodiment of nozzle system 10 described above are assigned the same reference numerals and are not described in detail below.

The nozzle system 10 includes the same structure of nozzle body 12 and nozzle tip 14 as described above combined with a modified alignment member 16'. The modification to the alignment member 16' consists of the addition of an integral housing 74' defining a mold gate 76'. The integral housing 74' has a cavity that defines a gathering space 42' for collection of pressurized melt prior to it passing through mold gate 76'. Abutment face 56' is defined on the outer surface of housing 74' for contacting mold plate 44 to form a seal against pressurized melt leaking from the gathering space 42' to adjacent parts of the molding machine.

The nozzle system 10 of the present invention is not limited to use with mold gates. The nozzle system 10, and in particular the alignment structures of the nozzle tip 14 and alignment member 16, 16', may be incorporated in a variety of alternative gate applications to accurately locate the respective melt channels 24 and 38. Examples are provided in Figs. 5-7 which show use with a direct sprue gate (Fig. 5), a hot valve gate (Fig. 6) and a cylindrical valve gate (Fig. 7). For convenience, corresponding reference numerals have been assigned to corresponding elements described above.

The nozzle system 10 is made of materials having relatively high thermal conductivity. Nozzle body 12 and alignment member 16, 16' are preferably formed from titanium, H-13 or other suitable materials that may be obtained and manufactured at reasonable costs. Nozzle tip 14 is preferably

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formed of tungsten carbide due to its superior heat transfer properties although other thermally conductive materials may be utilized.

The above described embodiments of the invention are intended to be examples of the present invention and alterations and
5 modifications may be effected thereto, by those of skill in the art, without departing from the scope of the invention which is defined solely by the claims appended hereto.

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WE CLAIM:

1. A nozzle tip for an injection molding machine, said nozzle tip comprising:
 - a body having a first portion and a second portion;
 - 5 a melt channel extending from an inlet defined in said first portion to an opening defined in said second portion, a first section of said melt channel extending from said inlet along a first axis, a second section of said melt channel extending from said first section along a second axis that is inclined relative to said first axis and a third section of said melt channel
 - 10 extending from said second section along a third axis that is parallel to and eccentric from said first axis, wherein a straight through channel is defined in said melt channel parallel to said first axis from said inlet to said opening.
2. A nozzle tip as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second portion is generally conical.
- 15 3. A nozzle tip as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second portion has an outer engagement surface that is generally frusto-conical.
4. A nozzle tip as claimed in claim 3, wherein said second portion is generally conical below said outer engagement surface.
5. A nozzle tip as claimed in claim 2, wherein said opening is
- 20 defined above the apex of said generally conical second portion.
6. A nozzle system for an injection molding machine, said nozzle system comprising:
 - a nozzle body defining a first melt channel and a bore along a common axis, said nozzle body having a first connector;
 - 25 a nozzle tip defining a first portion sized to fit in said bore and a

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second portion for protruding from said bore, said nozzle tip defining a second melt channel;

a first tapered engagement surface defined on said second portion of said nozzle tip; and

- 5 an alignment member having a cylindrical sleeve with a second connector for releasably connecting said alignment member to said first connector of said nozzle body, said alignment member defining an aperture coaxially with said cylindrical sleeve, said aperture having a second tapered engaging surface for engaging said first tapered engaging surface on said
10 nozzle tip to locate said nozzle tip in said nozzle body with said first and second melt channels aligned along said common axis.

7. A nozzle system as claimed in claim 6, wherein at least one of said engagement surfaces is frusto-conical.

8. A nozzle system as claimed in claim 6, wherein a hexagonal
15 flange is located on said alignment member concentrically with said sleeve to permit tightening or loosening of said threaded sleeve on said threaded nozzle body.

9. A nozzle system as claimed in claim 6, wherein an abutment face is located on said alignment member for sealing a gathering space
20 adjacent to said nozzle tip.

10. A nozzle system as claimed in claim 6, wherein said alignment member includes a housing that defines a mold gate concentric with said nozzle tip.

AMENDED CLAIMS

[received by the International Bureau on 28 March 2001 (28.03.01);
original claims 1-10 replaced by new claims 1-18 (4 pages)]

1. A nozzle system for an injection molding apparatus, said nozzle system comprising:
 - a nozzle body (12) defining a first melt channel (24), said first melt channel capable of communicating with a source of pressurized melt; and
 - a nozzle tip (14) having a first portion (32) and a second portion (34), said nozzle tip (14) defining a second melt channel (38), said second melt channel (38) extending from an inlet adapted to communicate with said first melt channel (24) to an opening (40) defined in an end of said nozzle tip (14), said opening (40) adapted to communicate with a mold cavity, said second melt channel (38) having a section (62) defined in said first portion (32) and a section (66) defined in said second portion (34), said first portion section (62) extending from said inlet along a first axis (22), said second portion section (66) communicating with said first portion section (62) and extending to said opening (40) along a second axis, said second axis being offset from said first axis (22), wherein a straight through channel (72) offset from said first axis (22) is provided by said second melt channel from said inlet to said opening.
2. The nozzle system of claim 1 wherein said through channel (72) is parallel to said first axis (22).
3. The nozzle system of claim 1 wherein said second axis is parallel to said first axis (22).
4. A nozzle system for an injection molding apparatus, said nozzle system comprising:
 - a nozzle body (12) defining a first melt channel (24), said first melt channel capable of communicating with a source of pressurized melt; and

a nozzle tip (14) having a first portion (32) and a second portion (34), said nozzle tip (14) defining a second melt channel (38), said second melt channel (38) extending from an inlet adapted to communicate with said first melt channel (24) to an opening (40) defined in an end of said nozzle tip (14),
5 said opening (40) adapted to communicate with a mold cavity, said second melt channel (38) having a section (62) defined in said first portion (32) and a section (66) defined in said second portion (34), said first portion section (62) extending from said inlet along a first axis (22) and having a wall (70), said second portion section (66) communicating with said first portion section (62)
10 and extending to said opening (40) along a second axis, said second axis being offset from said first axis (22), said second portion section (62) having a wall (68) disposed closer to said first axis (22) than said first portion wall (70).

5. The nozzle system of claim 4 wherein said second portion wall is substantially parallel to said first axis (22).

15 6. The nozzle system of claim 4 wherein a straight through channel (72) eccentric from said first axis (22) is provided from said inlet to said opening (40) in said second melt channel (38).

7. The nozzle system of claim 4 wherein said second axis is parallel to said first axis (22).

20 8. A nozzle tip for an injection molding machine, said nozzle tip comprising:

a body (14) having a first portion (32) and a second portion (34);
a melt channel (38) extending from an inlet defined in said first portion (32) to an opening (40) defined in said second portion (34), a first
25 section (62) of said melt channel extending from said inlet along a first axis (22), a second section (64) of said melt channel extending from said first section (62) along a second axis that is inclined relative to said first axis and a

third section (660 of said melt channel extending from said second section (64) along a third axis that is parallel to and eccentric from said first axis (22), wherein a straight through channel (72) is defined in said melt channel (38) parallel to said first axis (22) from said inlet to said opening (40).

5 9. A nozzle tip as claimed in claim 8 wherein said second portion (34) is generally conical.

10. A nozzle tip as claimed in claim 8 wherein said second portion (34) has an outer engagement surface that is generally frusto-conical.

11. A nozzle tip as claimed in claim 10, wherein said second portion
10 (34) is generally conical below said outer engagement surface.

12. A nozzle tip as claimed in claim 9, wherein said opening (40) is defined above the apex (37) of said generally conical second portion.

13. A nozzle system for an injection molding machine, said nozzle system comprising:

15 a nozzle body (12) defining a first melt channel (24), said nozzle body having a first connector (30);

a nozzle tip (14) defining a first portion (32) adapted to mount to said nozzle body (12) and a second portion (34), said nozzle tip (14) defining a second melt channel (38);

20 a first tapered engagement surface (36) defined on said second portion (34) of said nozzle tip (14); and

an alignment member (16) having a cylindrical sleeve with a second connector for releasably connecting said alignment member to said first connector of said nozzle body, said alignment member defining an
25 aperture coaxially with said cylindrical sleeve, said aperture having a second tapered engaging surface for engaging said first tapered engaging surface on

said nozzle tip to locate said nozzle tip in said nozzle body with said first and second melt channels aligned along said common axis.

14. A nozzle system as claimed in claim 13, wherein at least one of said engagement surfaces is frusto-conical.

5 15. A nozzle system as claimed in claim 13, wherein a hexagonal flange (52) is located on said alignment member concentrically with said sleeve to permit tightening or loosening of said threaded sleeve on said threaded nozzle body.

10 16. A nozzle system as claimed in claim 13, wherein an abutment face (56) is located on said alignment member for sealing a gathering space adjacent to said nozzle tip.

17. A nozzle system as claimed in claim 13, wherein said alignment member (16) includes a housing (74) that defines a mold gate concentric with said nozzle tip.

15 18. A method of transferring melt from an injection molding nozzle (12) through a nozzle tip (14) to a mold cavity comprising:
injecting melt under pressure from said injection molding nozzle (12) into a first flow path (62) along a first axis (22) in said nozzle tip (14);

20 diverting said melt from said first flow path (62) to a second flow path (66) along a second axis in said nozzle tip (14), said second axis being offset from said first axis; and

delivering said melt from said second flow path (66) to a mold cavity gate,

25 wherein a portion of said melt in said first melt flow path (62) is permitted to flow on a path (72) through said nozzle tip without diversion.

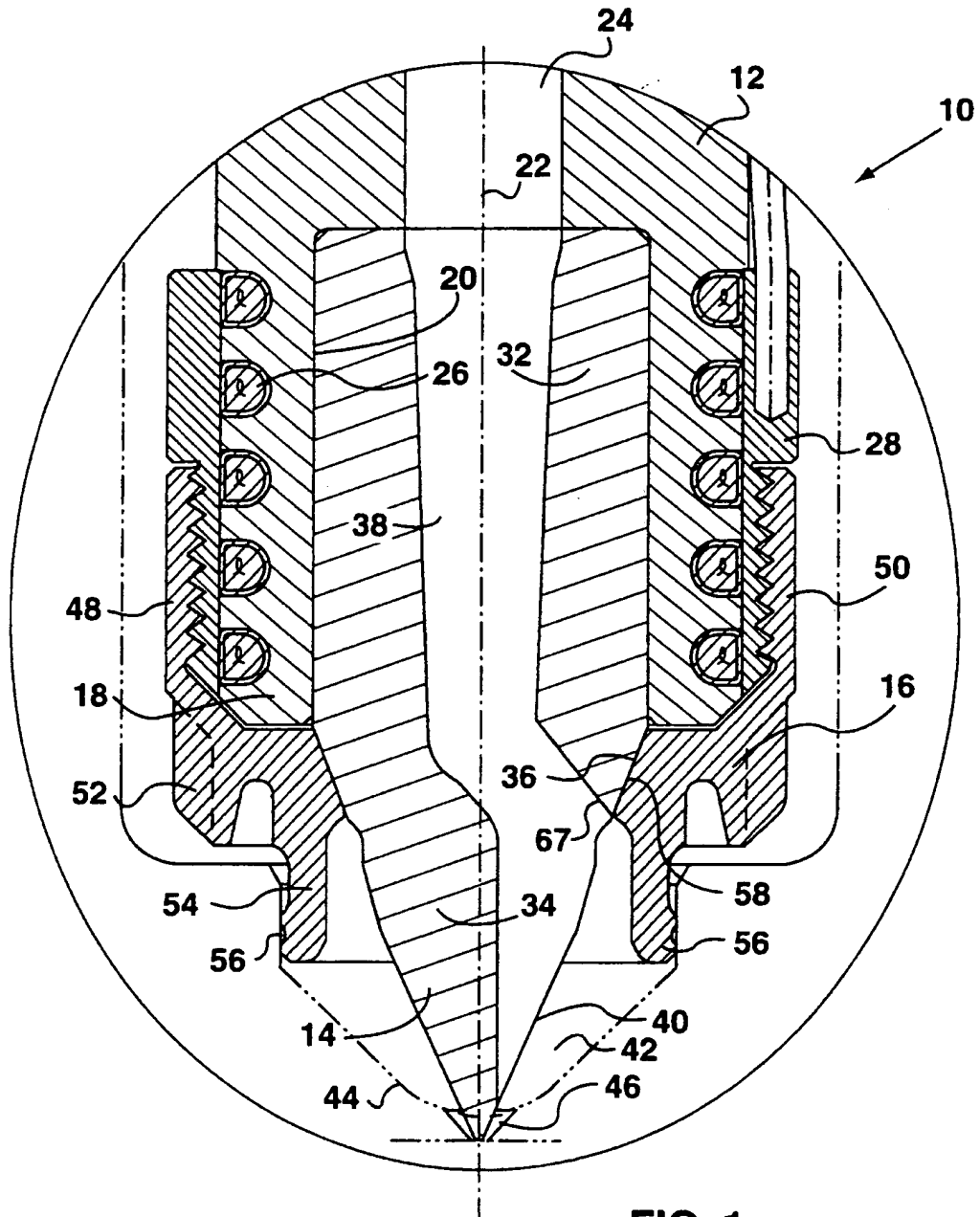


FIG. 1

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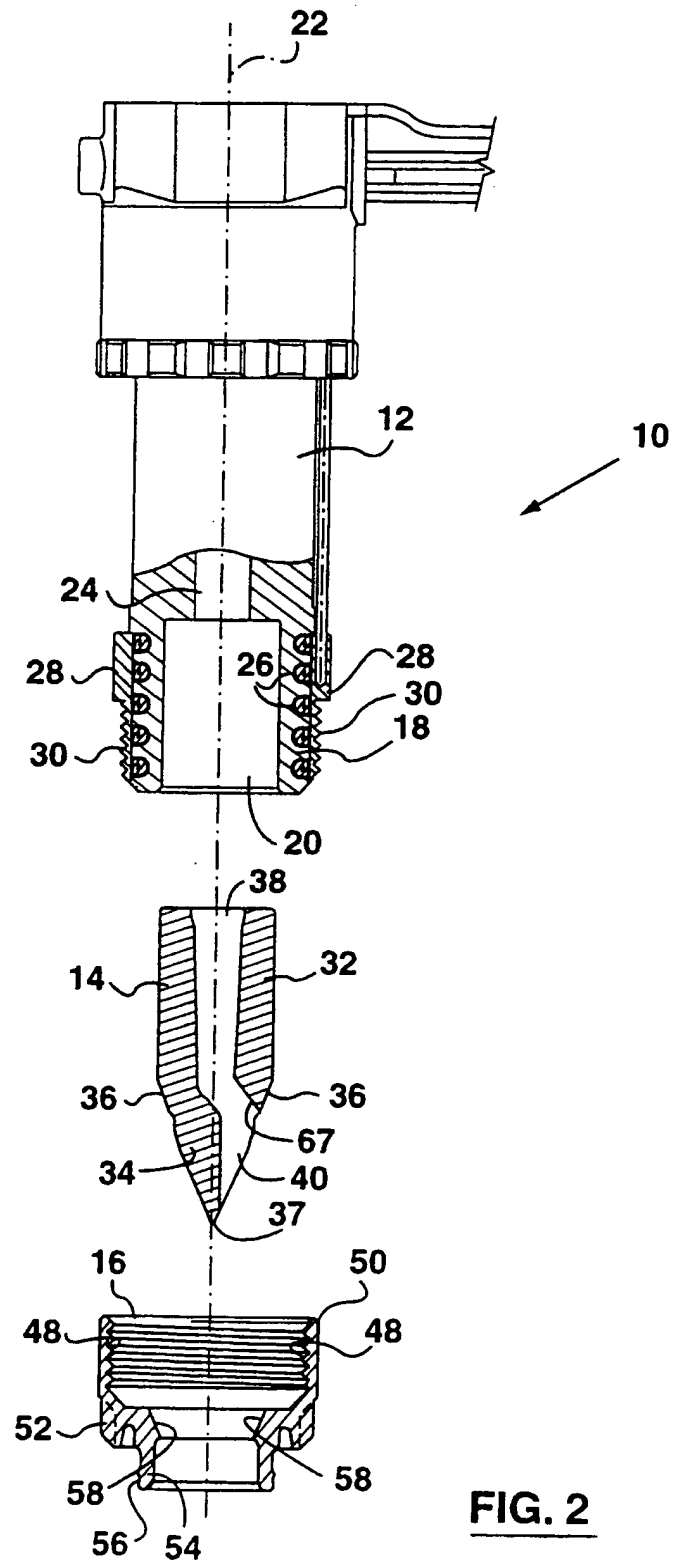


FIG. 2

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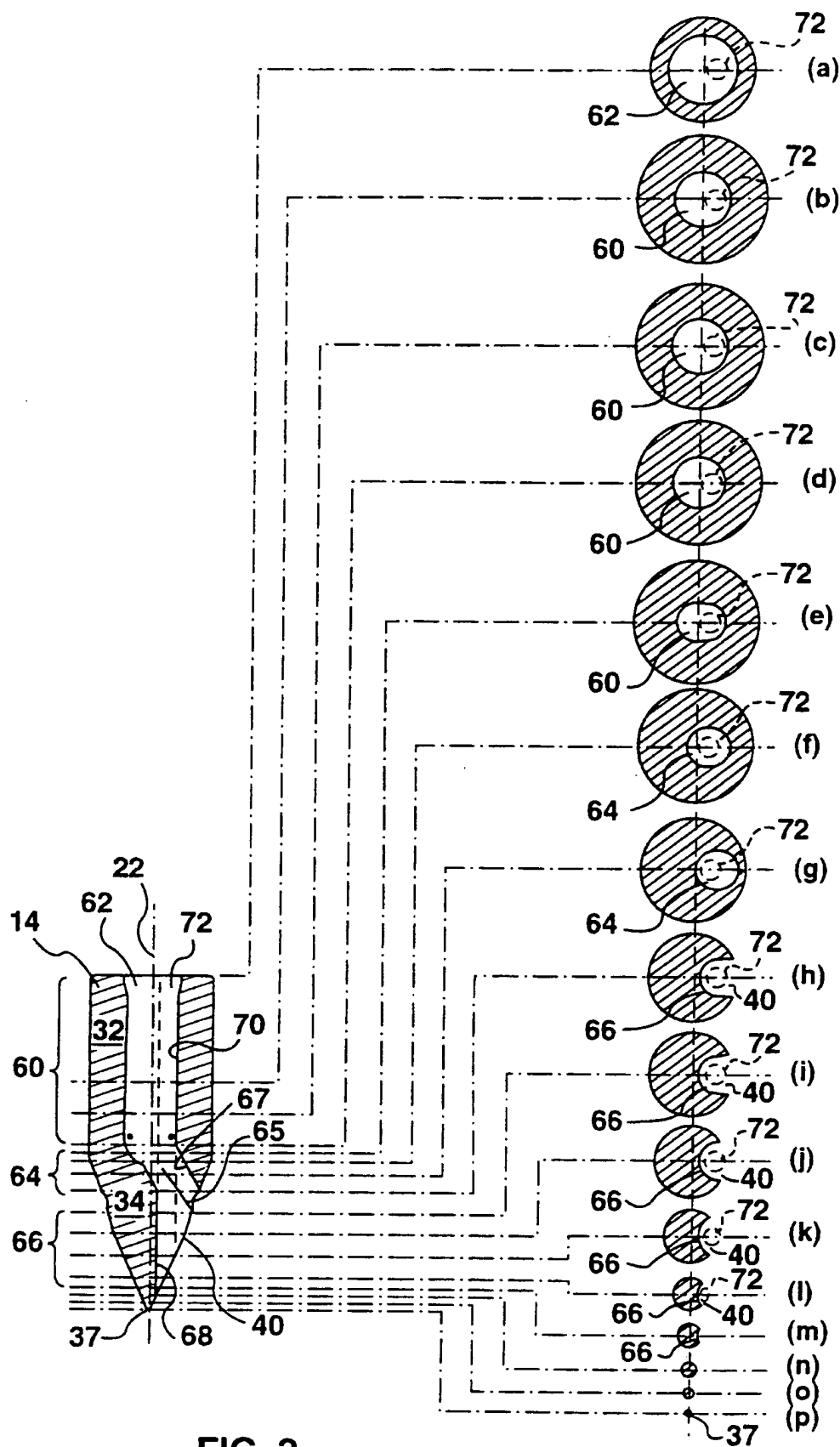
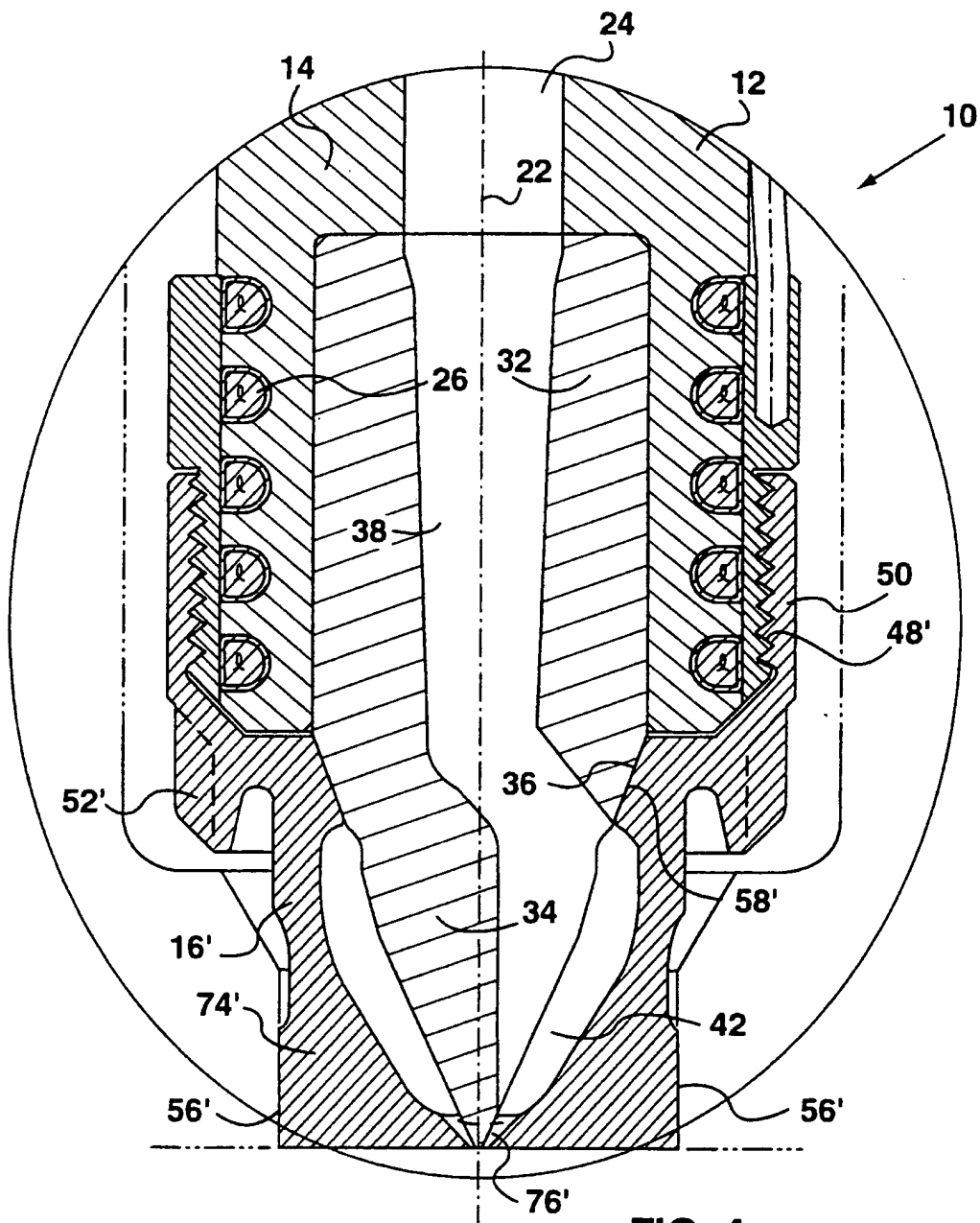


FIG. 3

**FIG. 4**

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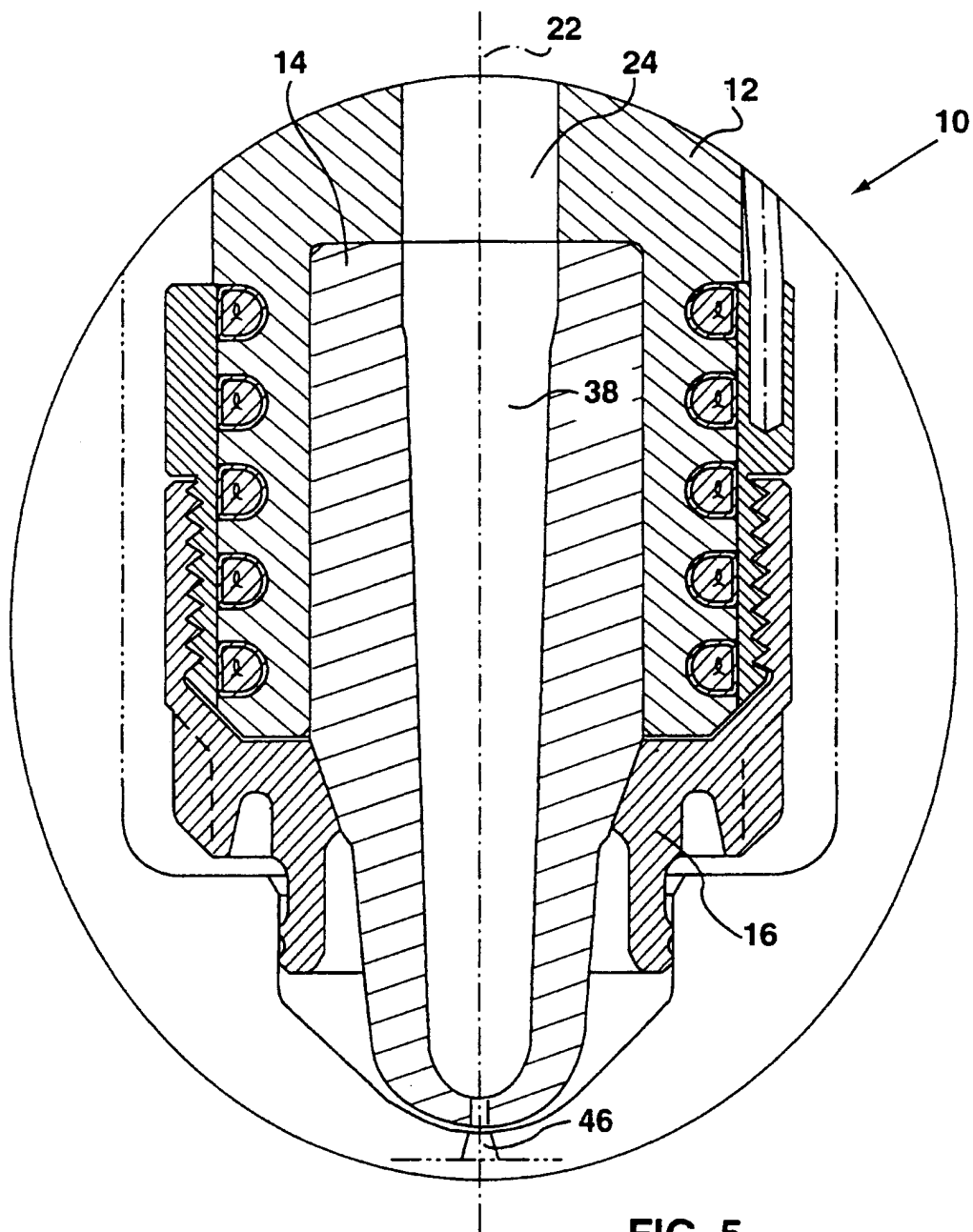
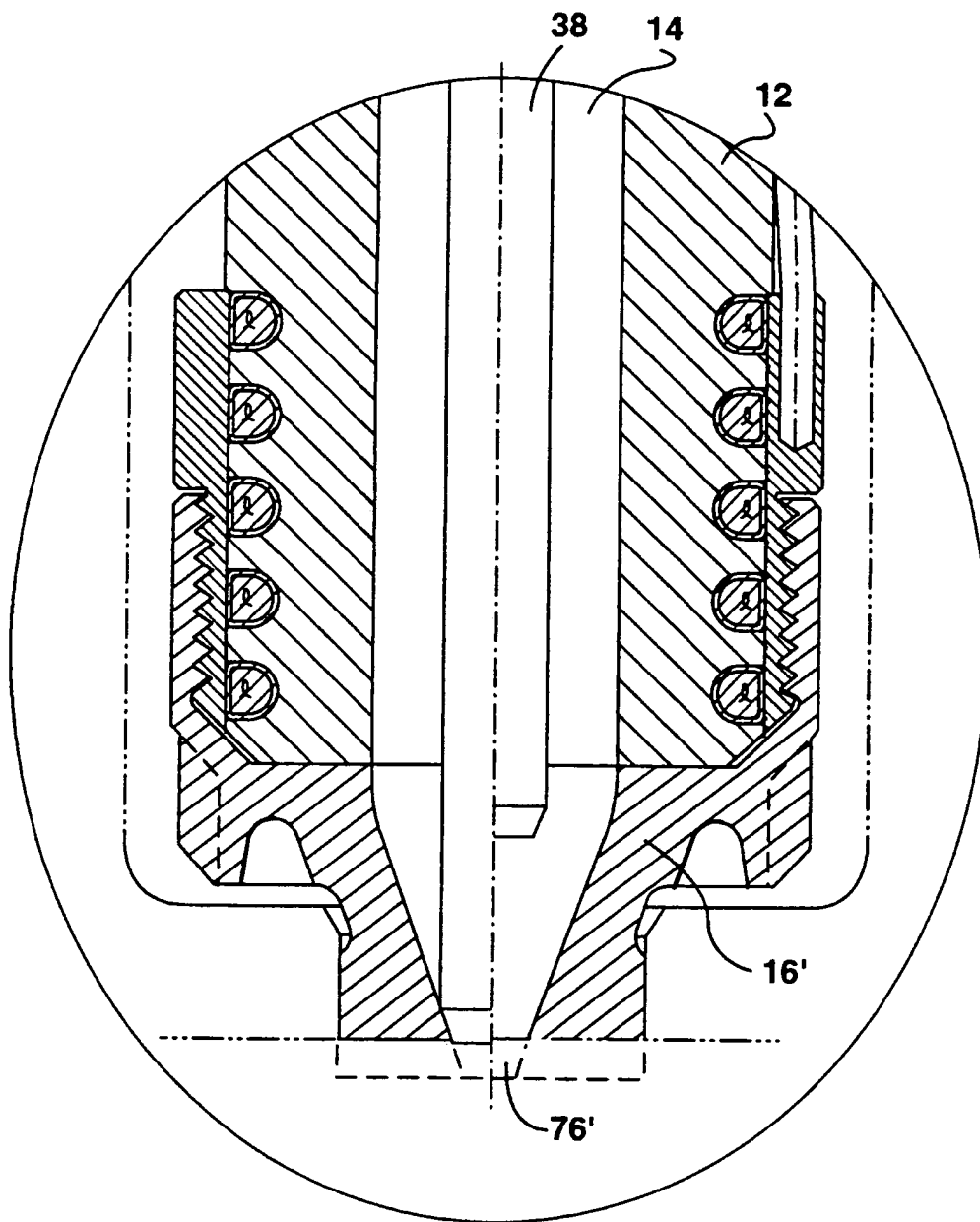


FIG. 5

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**FIG. 6**

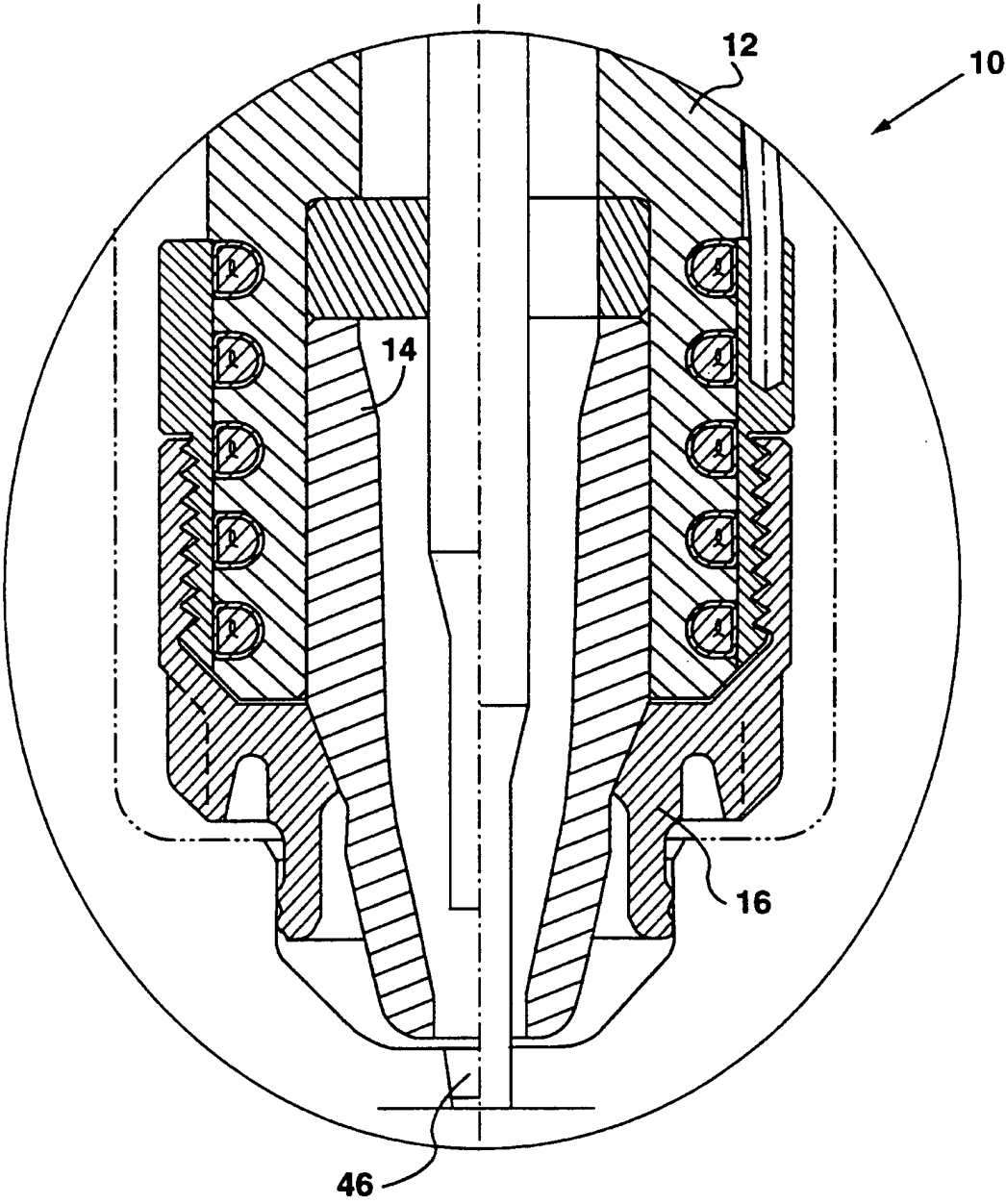


FIG. 7

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Intern. Application No

PCT/CA 00/01235

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 B29C45/27

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 B29C

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.



Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

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X document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

Y document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

G document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

22 January 2001

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29/01/2001

Name and mailing address of the ISA

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Intern. Application No

PCT/CA 00/01235

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

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